

Cupples, Samuel, House
3673 West Pine Boulevard
St. Louis
St. Louis (independent city)
Missouri

HABS No. MO-1833

HABS
MO,
76-SALV,
72-

PHOTOGRAPHS

WRITTEN HISTORICAL AND DESCRIPTIVE DATA

HISTORIC AMERICAN BUILDINGS SURVEY

SAMUEL CUPPLES HOUSE

HABS No. MO-1833

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MO,
96-SALV,
92-

Location: 3673 West Pine Boulevard, St. Louis, St. Louis (independent city), Missouri

Significance: House is a well-preserved example of Romanesque revival architecture containing original interior elements. It also contains parts of three different heating systems, ranging from the original fireplaces to later hot-air and steam heating systems. The Cupples family were well-known locally for their philanthropic activities, including support of several educational institutions in and around St. Louis.

Description: The Samuel Cupples House is a large masonry structure of three stories with an attic above. The south facade measures 72 feet; the east facade is 121 feet, and the west facade is 100 feet. Pink granite makes up the basement level, while the rest of the structure is rough-hewn purple limestone. The south (front) facade of the house contains an asymmetrical arrangement of a three-story round tower with a conical roof; a gabled wall dormer which also reaches to the third story; and a conical turret which occupies the second and third floors over the entrance porch. Heavy granite columns with carved capitals support Romanesque-style arches on the entrance porch. On the west side of the building is a porte cochere, and on the northwest side is a large semi-circular room and another tower which houses the stairs.

On the west, east, and south sides of the house is particularly noteworthy stonework. It accentuates individual elements such as the carved stone brackets for downspouts and carved cushion capitals on the south porch. Decorative copper sheathing covers the turret at the southeast corner.

The interior of the house has 53 rooms. Much interior woodwork is oak imported from England. The house contains a variety of formal public spaces. Among the service rooms included in the house is a butler's pantry with the original silver safe.

History: Samuel Cupples commissioned St. Louis architect Thomas B. Annan to build the house. Construction took place from 1889 to 1890, and cost ca. 500,000 dollars. The only alterations to the house were the addition of the round room on the north side, ca. 1896, replacing an original stoop porch. Initially the room was used as a nursery and later a conservatory. Also on the north side of the house a porch was enclosed to make a room (date not available).

The Cupples family owned the house from 1889 to 1919. The Railroad/Telegrapher's Union owned the house from 1919 to 1946. Currently St. Louis University owns the building. The basement is occupied by the McNamee Art Gallery. The University uses the upper floors for official receptions, and the house may be

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rented by the general public for the same purpose. The house is open for guided tours and contains a wide-ranging collection of furniture donated to the University.

The building is in excellent condition and regularly maintained.

Sources:

National Register of Historic Places Nomination Form, compiled by Father M.B. McNamee, S.J., December 2, 1975.

Telephone conversation with Deborah Morris, Administrative Assistant, Cupples House, June 29, 1988.

See also McNamee, Father M[aurice B., S. J.]. Cupples House: A Richardsonian Romanesque Mansion. St. Louis, MO: Harry Hagan, 1986.

Historian:

Robert Buerglener, HABS, June 29, 1988.

ADDENDUM TO
SAMUEL CUPPLES HOUSE
3673 West Pine Boulevard
Saint Louis City
Missouri

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National Park Service
U.S. Department of the Interior
Washington, D.C. 20013